

NSC BRIEFING

15 November 1956

IMPACT ON ASIA

- I. With few exceptions, Asia has been far more affected by Egypt than by Hungary.
 - A. Egypt is deemed an Asian brother, fighting old, common enemies of freedom.
 - B. Hungary is considered remote and essentially a white man's problem.
- II. India. Nehru's statements in last two weeks reflect the thinking of most neighboring leaders. He quickly condemned British-French action as "naked aggression," but delayed comment on Hungary several days.
 - A. When Nehru finally got round to Hungary (9 Nov) he linked it with Egypt as another of "small countries made to suffer because of the rivalries of great powers."
 - B. But Nehru took edge off this small expression of sympathy by observing that fighting in Hungary appeared merely "civil conflict."
 - C. In UN, moreover, Menon was only Asian who voted against 9 Nov resolution calling for Soviet withdrawal from Hungary.
 1. Hints by Indian officials imply that Menon misinterpreted his instructions in so voting.

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- III. Pakistan and Afghanistan also concentrating attention on Egypt almost to exclusion Hungary.
- A. Pakistan president Mirza called 8-9 Nov meeting of Moslem members of the Baghdad Pact: meeting demanded that foreign troops leave Egypt, and Pakistan even talked of leaving Commonwealth. However, no mention made of Hungary.
 - B. Afghanistan was the first country to answer Egypt's call for volunteers.
- IV. Four of the five Colombo Powers (India, Ceylon, Burma and Indonesia) now paying more heed to Hungary, although leaving issue in second place.
- A. In 14 Nov joint statement after meeting in New Delhi, , four prime ministers first called for UK-French withdrawal from Egypt and then "noted with distress" events in Hungary.
 - B. Four declared Sov forces should withdraw "speedily" and Hungarians should "decide own future" without external intervention "from any quarter."
- V. In Indonesia, both executive and parliament have violently attacked British, French and Israelis as aggressors in Egypt.
- A. British and French embassies have been mobbed, labor unions are refusing to service British and French planes or ships, and waiters in Djakarta hotels even refusing to serve UK and French nationals.
 - B. President Sukarno publicly suggested Anglo-French action was forerunner of a Dutch attempt to retake Indonesia.

C. Indonesian Foreign Minister told Parliament that Government disapproved Soviet action in Hungary, but emphasized that events in Hungary should not divert Indonesian attention from the far more serious Anglo-French "aggression" in Egypt.

VI. Other Southeast Asian reactions also highly critical on Egypt, less concerned with Hungary.

A. In Burma, news coverage of Egypt overshadows Hungary. However, Premier Ba Swe stated that Soviets--as well as British and French--were "scuttling the UN."

B. In Thailand, four minor political parties issued a joint condemnation of British and French and march through Bangkok demanded Thai withdrawal from SEATO. Our Embassy reports that Asian SEATO representatives are showing tension and will have difficulties explaining their treaty ties with UK and France to home public "for some time."

VII. Exceptions to general Asian attitudes are South Korea, Taiwan and Japan.

A. First two, strongly anti-Communist, are being greatly stimulated by Hungary. At first, saw revolt as beginning of collapse of Communist world.

B. Taipei has criticized other Asian countries for condemning British and French aggression, while remaining silent on Hungary.

C. Japan has been more noncommittal. Little said by officials on either Hungary or Egypt, while press has expressed disapproval of both Soviets and Anglo-French.

VIII. In summation, prestige of Britain and France in Asia undoubtedly at all-time low and probably will not recover quickly.

- A. USSR's prestige also tarnished, but strong Soviet threats to Britain, France and Israel have had balancing effect.
- B. Stock of US, so far, has risen high, although local Communists working hard to link US with British and French, and to give USSR credit for Egyptian cease-fire.